

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



AS I SEE IT

New Wind in Our Sails for Career and College: Ready, Set, Go!

August 26, 2010

North Carolina is known for education innovation. Our new and redesigned high schools are on the cutting edge of school reform. We lead the nation with our number of early colleges. This state was the first to implement a statewide teacher working conditions survey and it is no surprise that we are home to the largest number of National Board Certified educators in the country. In addition, all of the work we are currently doing in revising the state's curriculum, assessments and accountability model is nothing short of groundbreaking.

Even with this strong foundation, difficult budget times make taking public education to where it needs to be in the 21st century a challenge. I am pleased to say that our next steps toward this goal became much more certain this week when North Carolina was named one of 10 winners in the second round of the Race to the Top (RttT) competition. The approximately \$400 million this state will soon receive represents a powerful new wind in our sails. This grant will guide us further and faster to the destination in which every single student will graduate high school prepared for college, a career and the future.

Governor Perdue's "Career and College: Ready, Set, Go!" education reform plan was the blueprint for the state's Race to the Top application and clearly sets our course forward now that we have received the grant. Under this bold plan, RttT funds will support the statewide implementation of new curriculum standards and assessments to help all students gain the skills they need for success in a global economy. This plan will also enable us to build on the important work we are doing to turn around low-performing schools and ensure all students, regardless of their backgrounds or where they live, have access to a quality public education.

Providing a great teacher for every student and a great leader for every school in North Carolina is critical if we are to increase student achievement and the graduation rate. That is why the creation of a statewide system of professional development for educators that incorporates incentives, improved evaluation measures, online learning and new principal leadership academies is also a critical part of this reform plan.

We cannot move our schools, teachers and students ahead in the 21st century without technology. Under Governor Perdue's plan, we will expand virtual learning opportunities for students and give educators new tools that provide immediate feedback on how well students are learning with the press of a button. Funds will also be used to create a data infrastructure to help us better manage and use all the valuable information we already collect.

Our state would not have received a Race to the Top grant without the outstanding level of collaboration and support shown among state leaders, local school districts, public and private colleges and universities and many education associations. Thanks to this strong partnership and a lot of hard work, there is a bright future ahead for North Carolina and today we are moving toward it further and faster than ever before.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill".

Bill Harrison, Chairman
State Board of Education